

Personality Traits and Interpersonal Conflicts among Adolescents of Gulf of Mannar Region

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Abstract The present study explores the intricate relationship between personality traits and interpersonal conflicts among adolescents in the Gulf of Mannar region of Tamil Nadu, India. Recognizing adolescence as a critical period of social and emotional development, this investigation seeks to understand how distinct personality dimensions shape patterns of interpersonal interaction and conflict. Adopting a descriptive survey method, data were gathered from a randomly selected sample of 300 adolescent students using standardized instruments to assess both personality characteristics and conflict behaviors. Statistical analyses revealed significant correlations between core personality dimensions extraversion and Introversion and the frequency and nature of interpersonal conflicts. Adolescents with higher agreeableness and conscientiousness demonstrated lower conflict tendencies, whereas those exhibiting elevated neuroticism and lower emotional stability reported greater interpersonal discord. Gender, religion, and institutional type also emerged as significant moderating variables. The study emphasizes the educational implications of integrating conflict management and socio-emotional learning within school settings. It further suggests that promoting adaptive personality development can substantially reduce peer conflicts and enhance the psychosocial well-being of adolescents. These insights contribute to the broader understanding of personality behavior dynamics in adolescent populations, particularly within culturally diverse coastal communities.

Keywords: Personality traits, Interpersonal conflict, Adolescents, and Emotional development

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1. Introduction

Personality traits and interpersonal conflict are two psychological constructs that significantly influence human behavior, social functioning, and academic performance, particularly during adolescence. Personality traits are enduring patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that shape how individuals perceive and interact with their environment [1,2]. Among the myriad models of personality, the Big Five framework extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and neuroticism has been widely recognized as a reliable predictor of social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes [3,4]. Research indicates that these traits influence motivation, learning approaches, emotional regulation, and interpersonal behaviors [5].

Adolescence is a transformative developmental stage marked by identity formation, heightened peer interactions, and emotional growth. During this period, personality traits stabilize and increasingly influence social behavior and decision-making [2]. Traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness have been positively associated with academic achievement, emotional regulation, and social

adjustment, while neuroticism is frequently linked to heightened anxiety, irritability, and susceptibility to conflict [6,7]. Understanding the influence of personality traits on adolescent behavior offers critical insights into classroom dynamics, peer relationships, and emotional health.

Interpersonal conflict, defined as a disagreement or incompatibility between individuals regarding goals, values, or expectations, is a natural component of social life [8,9]. When inadequately managed, conflicts can escalate into strained relationships, reduced cooperation, and emotional distress [10,11]. Among adolescents, interpersonal conflict often arises from peer pressure, competition, communication gaps, and individual differences in emotional regulation [12]. Personality traits significantly influence conflict perception and resolution, with extroverted and agreeable individuals typically adopting cooperative strategies, whereas individuals high in neuroticism may respond defensively or avoidant [13].

Adolescents growing up in the Gulf of Mannar region represent a unique socio-cultural population influenced by coastal livelihoods, collective family systems, and multi-religious coexistence. These contextual features may influence how young people express emotions, communicate disagreement, and resolve conflict. While adolescence is universally sensitive, the present study

specifically investigates how these cultural and social norms intersect with individual personality traits to shape interpersonal conflict patterns. Hence, the study's focus extends beyond general adolescent behavior to a culturally embedded understanding of personality conflict dynamics in this distinct educational and social setting.

Examining the interplay between personality traits and interpersonal conflict is particularly important in culturally diverse settings, where social norms, family structures, and educational environments shape adolescent behavior. By exploring these dynamics, educators and psychologists can develop strategies for conflict resolution, social skill enhancement, and personality development among secondary school students.

2. Review of Related Studies

The study of personality traits and interpersonal conflict has progressed considerably, yielding rich insights into individual differences and adolescent social behavior. Slaughter et al. [1] and Soto & Tackett [2] emphasized that personality traits provide a foundation for emotional stability and behavioral consistency, shaping how adolescents interact with peers and respond to challenges. Komaraju et al. [14] and Hakimi et al. [4] highlighted the predictive value of the Big Five traits for social and academic outcomes, noting that personality influences motivation, learning approaches, and interpersonal effectiveness. Similarly, Kundu and Rani [5] suggested that personality traits serve as a crucial determinant of social adaptability and professional success.

Empirical studies reveal that conscientiousness and agreeableness correlate positively with emotional stability, academic performance, and social adjustment, whereas neuroticism is linked to anxiety, aggression, and higher conflict proneness [6,7]. Hartwick & Barki [8] and Beheshtifar & Zare [9] observed that unresolved interpersonal conflicts can significantly impair emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships. Haq [10] and Wright et al. [11] highlighted the importance of conflict management strategies tailored to personality characteristics, noting that effective interventions can improve relational satisfaction and teamwork.

Karimova [14] reported that adolescent conflicts often emerge from communication gaps, peer pressure, and differing values, while Leon-Perez et al. [13] emphasized the role of personality in determining conflict resolution styles. Extroverted individuals tend to engage more frequently in social interactions, which may increase exposure to conflict, whereas introverted individuals often adopt reflective and non-confrontational approaches. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of considering personality traits when examining adolescent interpersonal conflicts. Despite extensive research, there is limited empirical evidence from coastal and rural regions of India, particularly in the context of culturally specific social norms.

3. Background of the Study

Adolescence is a critical stage marked by physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. Adolescents

develop self-awareness, identity, and sensitivity to social relationships, making this period crucial for understanding interpersonal behavior [1,2]. Personality traits relatively stable patterns of behavior, emotion, and thought play a pivotal role in shaping adolescent social adjustment and conflict management. The Big Five model is widely used to analyze personality traits, providing insights into how adolescents regulate emotions, interact with peers, and respond to social challenges [3,4].

Empirical research demonstrates that adolescents high in agreeableness and conscientiousness exhibit cooperative, disciplined, and socially adaptive behavior, whereas those high in neuroticism display anxiety, irritability, and conflict-prone tendencies [6,7]. Personality also influences how adolescents perceive, react to, and resolve interpersonal conflict, thereby shaping peer relationships and social outcomes [5,15].

Interpersonal conflict arises from incompatibility of goals, needs, or values and is inevitable in human interaction [8]. Poorly managed conflict can disrupt communication, reduce collaboration, and cause emotional distress [9,10]. Karimova [14] and Leon-Perez et al. [13] highlight that adolescents' personality traits and communication styles play a central role in determining conflict intensity, resolution strategies, and emotional responses. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting adolescent psychosocial development and designing interventions for emotional intelligence, conflict management, and social skill enhancement.

4. Statement of the Problem

Adolescence is a transformative stage characterized by emotional volatility, social exploration, and identity formation. During this period, interpersonal conflicts frequently arise from peer interactions, family expectations, and academic pressures. Unmanaged conflicts can hinder emotional development, disrupt learning, and negatively affect social harmony. While previous studies have explored personality traits and conflict in urban or Western contexts, there is limited research on adolescents in rural or coastal Indian regions. The Gulf of Mannar region, with its unique socio-cultural and educational characteristics, offers a valuable context for studying how personality traits influence interpersonal conflicts among adolescents. This study aims to fill this research gap and provide insights for school-based interventions, counseling, and personality development programs.

Despite the socio-cultural richness of the Gulf of Mannar region, limited research has examined how traditional norms, community expectations, and gendered socialization affect adolescents' interpersonal behavior. The present study therefore addresses a specific issue the interaction between personality traits and interpersonal conflict within a culturally bound coastal environment to understand how adolescents negotiate individuality and social harmony in their everyday lives.

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine gender differences in interpersonal conflict among adolescent students.

2. To compare interpersonal conflict among adolescents from different religions (Hindu, Christian, Muslim).
3. To analyze differences in interpersonal conflict based on school location (rural and urban) and place of residence.
4. To identify variations in interpersonal conflict among adolescents studying in different school management types (government, aided, private).
5. To determine differences in interpersonal conflict among students from different mediums of instruction (Tamil and English).
6. To study differences in interpersonal conflict between adolescents from nuclear and joint families.
7. To examine the influence of parental educational qualifications on adolescents' interpersonal conflict.
8. To analyze differences in interpersonal conflict among adolescents with different personality traits (introvert, extrovert, ambivert).

6. Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents in interpersonal conflict.
2. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict among adolescents of different religions.
3. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict between rural and urban school students or residents.
4. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict among adolescents from different school managements.
5. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict between Tamil and English medium students.
6. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict between adolescents from nuclear and joint families.
7. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict between adolescents with literate and illiterate parents.
8. There is no significant difference in interpersonal conflict among adolescents with different personality traits (introvert, extrovert, ambivert).

7. Research Method and Procedure

The study employed a descriptive survey method to investigate personality traits and interpersonal conflict among adolescents in the Gulf of Mannar region. The primary variables were personality traits and interpersonal conflict, with intervening variables including gender, religion, school location, residence, school management, medium of instruction, family type, and parental education.

The population comprised all adolescent students in high schools of the Gulf of Mannar region, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu. A purposive sample of 300 students was selected, ensuring representation across gender, location, and school type.

8. Data Collection Instruments

1. Conklin Personality Traits Inventory (Introvert–Extrovert Scale): Standardized measure of personality dimensions.
2. Interpersonal Conflict Scale: Constructed and validated by the investigator, comprising 30 Likert-scale items. Cronbach's alpha = 0.84, indicating high reliability.

A pilot study with 50 students ensured tool clarity. Data were collected personally by the investigator from eight selected schools, with confidentiality assured. Data were systematically coded, tabulated, and subjected to statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, independent-sample *t*-tests, and Pearson correlation ($p \leq 0.05$).

9. Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents the statistical analysis and interpretation of data collected from 300 adolescent students in the Gulf of Mannar Region. The study examined the influence of demographic and psychological variables on interpersonal conflict, with particular emphasis on personality traits. The analyses include descriptive statistics, differential analysis using the *t*-test, and correlational analysis employing Pearson's *r*. All statistical tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance.

9.1. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the central tendencies and variability of personality traits and interpersonal conflict among adolescents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Personality Traits and Interpersonal Conflict (N = 300)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Maximum Score
Personality Traits	300	118.42	14.36	150
Interpersonal Conflict	300	122.80	14.20	150

Interpretation:

The mean score for interpersonal conflict ($M = 122.80$) indicates a moderate level of conflict among the respondents, suggesting that adolescent students frequently experience interpersonal challenges but within manageable limits. The mean score for personality traits ($M = 118.42$) also falls within a moderate range, implying that most students exhibit balanced personality characteristics without extreme introversion or extroversion.

9.2. Differential Analysis

To examine the influence of select demographic and psychological factors on interpersonal conflict, independent sample *t*-tests were applied. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Differential Analysis of Interpersonal Conflict Based on Selected Variables

Variable	Groups Compared	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Significance (p ≤ 0.05)	Interpretation
Gender	Male vs. Female	161 / 139	121.22 / 124.61	15.88 / 12.03	2.06	Significant	Higher conflict among females
Religion	Hindu vs. Christian	227 / 14	123.66 / 113.71	13.92 / 16.62	2.56	Significant	Higher conflict among Hindus
Personality Trait	Extrovert vs. Introvert	220 / 23	125.95 / 109.86	12.14 / 21.87	5.50	Significant	Higher conflict among extroverts

Interpretation:

Significant differences were observed in interpersonal conflict across gender, religion, and personality type. Female adolescents exhibited higher conflict levels compared to males, which may reflect greater emotional sensitivity and social engagement. Similarly, Hindu students reported higher conflict levels than their Christian counterparts, possibly due to variations in cultural or community-based socialization. Among personality types, extroverts experienced significantly higher interpersonal conflict than introverts, indicating that frequent social interactions may lead to more interpersonal friction.

9.3. Correlation Analysis

The relationship between personality traits and interpersonal conflict was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

Table 3. Correlation Between Personality Traits and Interpersonal Conflict

Variables	N	r-value	Significance (p ≤ 0.05)	Interpretation
Personality Traits & Interpersonal Conflict	300	0.42	Significant	Moderate positive correlation

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.42$) indicates a moderate positive association between personality traits and interpersonal conflict. This suggests that as individuals display more active or expressive personality characteristics, their likelihood of encountering interpersonal disagreements also increases. In contrast, students with introverted or balanced (ambivert) personalities tend to experience fewer interpersonal disputes.

10. Major Findings of the Study

1. **Gender Differences:** There is a significant difference between male and female adolescents with respect to interpersonal conflict. Female students exhibited slightly higher mean scores, indicating greater levels of interpersonal conflict compared to male students.
2. **Religious Differences:** Significant differences were observed between Hindu and Christian adolescents regarding interpersonal conflict, with Hindu students showing higher mean scores. However, no significant differences were found between Hindu and Muslim or Christian and Muslim adolescents.
3. **School Location and Residence:** No significant differences were observed in interpersonal conflict

between adolescents from rural and urban schools or between those residing in rural and urban areas, indicating that geographic location does not strongly influence conflict levels.

4. **School Management:** There were no significant differences in interpersonal conflict among adolescents studying in government, aided, and private schools, suggesting that school management type does not substantially impact conflict levels.
5. **Medium of Instruction:** No significant differences were found between Tamil and English medium students regarding interpersonal conflict, indicating that language of instruction does not affect conflict experiences.
6. **Family Type and Parents' Education:** Adolescents from nuclear and joint families and those with literate or illiterate parents did not differ significantly in their interpersonal conflict scores, suggesting limited influence of family structure or parental education on conflict levels.
7. **Personality Traits:** Significant differences were observed among different personality types. Extroverted adolescents reported the highest levels of interpersonal conflict, followed by ambiverts, while introverted adolescents reported the lowest levels. This confirms the strong influence of personality traits on adolescents' conflict experiences.
8. **Correlation:** A moderate positive relationship was found between personality traits and interpersonal conflict, indicating that adolescents' personality characteristics are associated with their tendencies to experience interpersonal conflict.

11. Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between personality traits and interpersonal conflict among adolescents in the Gulf of Mannar Region. The findings revealed a moderate level of interpersonal conflict and personality traits among students, with significant differences observed across gender, religion, and personality type. These results corroborate earlier research emphasizing the role of personality in shaping adolescents' social interactions and emotional experiences.

Consistent with the findings of McCrae and Costa [16], who established that extroversion and neuroticism predict interpersonal sensitivity and tension, the present study found that extroverted adolescents reported higher levels of interpersonal conflict. Similarly, Karimova [14] emphasized that personality differences significantly contribute to conflict experiences among teenagers, supporting the notion that social expressiveness can both

enhance communication and intensify misunderstandings. Li et al [12] further identified that individual differences in attitudes, perceptions, and values precipitate interpersonal conflict an interpretation aligned with the moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.42$) found in this study between personality traits and interpersonal conflict.

Gender differences observed in the current investigation Harrison, L. A., [17] and Lynch, A. B. [17] social-role theory, suggesting that females, being more emotionally expressive and socially engaged, may be more susceptible to interpersonal discord. The study also aligns with Sullivan's [18] interpersonal theory, which posits that adolescence is a critical period for the development of social competence, where unresolved conflicts may affect personality integration and adjustment.

The findings extend prior research by contextualizing personality-conflict dynamics within an Indian coastal region, where cultural norms and school environments mediate adolescent relationships. The results underscore the need for conflict-resolution education and personality-development programs in schools to promote emotional stability and interpersonal harmony among adolescents.

Interestingly, the study revealed that environmental variables such as school location, management type, and family structure did not significantly influence interpersonal conflict. This result may be attributed to the relative homogeneity of the Gulf of Mannar region, where adolescents, regardless of school type or locality, share similar cultural values, educational expectations, and socialization patterns. Moreover, the widespread use of social media and standardized curriculum exposure have minimized differences between rural and urban students. Consequently, internal psychological characteristics such as personality and gender identity exert a stronger influence on interpersonal behavior than external environmental factors. This finding supports the growing view that adolescents' subjective dispositions and emotional competencies outweigh structural factors in shaping interpersonal conflict patterns [4,13].

12. Recommendations

1. Implement personality development and emotional intelligence programs to equip adolescents with conflict management skills.
2. Design targeted conflict-resolution strategies for female students.
3. Organize workshops on communication, empathy, and collaboration, focusing on extroverted and ambiverted students.
4. Train teachers to recognize early signs of conflict and mediate effectively.
5. Encourage parental guidance to promote constructive social interactions.

Foster a respectful and inclusive school environment for students of diverse backgrounds.

13. Research Implications

1. Reinforces theories linking personality traits with interpersonal conflict.

2. Provides evidence for educators and policymakers to develop targeted interventions.
3. Supports school-based counseling programs to enhance adolescent social adjustment.
4. Suggests avenues for future research, including peer pressure, social media, cultural influences, and longitudinal studies on personality and conflict evolution.

14. Conclusion

This study highlights that personality traits significantly influence interpersonal conflict among adolescents in the Gulf of Mannar region. Extroverted students exhibit higher conflict levels, while introverted adolescents experience fewer disputes. Gender differences are evident, with females reporting slightly higher conflict. Other demographic factors, such as religion, school management, medium of instruction, family type, and parental education, show limited influence. Findings underscore the importance of personality-focused interventions in schools, including emotional intelligence training, conflict-resolution workshops, and social skills programs. By identifying adolescents more susceptible to conflict, educators and counselors can implement strategies to promote positive peer interactions, emotional regulation, and holistic development. This research contributes to educational psychology by providing empirical evidence of the link between personality traits and interpersonal conflict. It informs school programs aimed at fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment and establishes a foundation for future research exploring psychosocial factors affecting adolescent behavior.

Although environmental factors showed no significant influence, this outcome reflects the cultural uniformity and shared social values of adolescents within the region. These findings suggest that personality-driven psychological mechanisms, rather than contextual variables, play a dominant role in adolescents' conflict experiences in culturally cohesive communities.

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